

A TRANSLATION OF THE MEDIEVAL SEQUENCE  
(see page 229)

Mother of the Saviour, greeting,  
Chosen vessel, vessel fitting  
    For the gift of heavenly grace;  
Vessel from all ages planned,  
Vessel cut by wisdom's hand  
    To assume the foremost place.

Thou of whom the Word was born,  
Thou the flower upon the thorn,  
    Its surpassing flowering;  
Store of perfumes guarded well,  
Stocked with ointments sweet to smell,  
    Bolted door and garden spring.

Hail, O Virgin glorious,  
Thou dost meditate for us  
    Who didst our Redeemer bear;  
Thou the myrtle tempering,  
Blood-red rose of suffering,  
    Nard that sweetly fills the air.

Hail, O Mother of true love,  
Thee the Trinity approve  
    For their common resting-place;  
Yet with some more special care  
Thou a lodging dost prepare  
    For the Word, thy Son, to grace.

Mary, thou, the sailor's star,  
Art in honour singular  
Since the heavenly orders are  
    All thy subjects, thou their crown;  
Now in heaven thou art set,  
Charge thy Son with us, and let  
Neither treachery nor threat  
    Of the devil cast us down.

Armed and ready, let us be  
Safely watched and kept by thee;  
Let his subtle trickery  
From thy care and foresight flee.  
    From thy strength his stubbornness.  
Jesu, Son of the Most High,  
Hear thy mother's servants cry,  
Pardon do thou not deny,  
But reform us, and to thy  
    Light and glory liken us.

## NOTES

- line 10. *Porta clausa*, Ezech. 44, 1-3. *Vide* St Albert, *De Laudibus Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 10, 31, 8-9.  
*Fons hortorum*—'the fountain which is called "the fountain of gardens" (Cant. 4, 15), i.e., that which waters them. The gardens are the Church and the minds of the just. The stream of this fountain is Christ our Lord, who says, in Eccus. 24, 42, "I will water my garden of plants". For his mother waters them, but by her stream, that is, by means of her Son.'—St Albert, *op. cit.*, 9, 1, 1.
- lines 11, 12. *Cella pigmentaria*—'According to the Master of the Histories (i.e., Peter Comestor), the "house of the forest of Libanus" (3 Kings 7, 2) was divided into two parts. The lower part was called *nechota* (*vide* 4 Kings 20, 13), that is, the ointment store, which contained the ointments and incense that Solomon used for the temple and his palace; by these ointments and incense is denoted the perfume of Mary's virginity.'—St Albert, *op. cit.*, 10, 30, 10. *cf.* also 10, 15.
- line 16. *Mirtus temperantiae*—Myrtle 'is said to have the power to repress lust. . . . It is fitting therefore that our Lady and the saints should be signified by myrtle, since they repress the corruption of sensuality first in themselves and then in others.'—*Op. cit.*, 12, 4, 40.
- line 17. *Rosa patientiae*—Our Lady is called a rose 'because of her outstanding patience: for it is red, the colour of blood, and by blood is meant the martyrdom which she suffered by compassion for her Son: and the deeper the red of the rose the deeper is her sorrow signified to be.'—*Op. cit.*, 12, 4, 34.
- line 21. *Triclinium*—literally a couch running round three sides of a table for reclining on at meals, or a room furnished in this way.
- lines 41, 42. *Cf.* Phil. 3, 21.

## LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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